

Section III: State Agency Procedure Manual

IX. State Food Delivery

A. Food Delivery System

Purpose

This policy describes the WIC benefit food delivery system used by the Montana WIC Program.

Policy

It is the policy of the Montana WIC Program that food retailers are used for redemption of WIC food benefits. Direct distribution will be used for medical foods and formulas not readily available in the retail system.

1. Authorized Vendors

- Only those vendors authorized by the Montana WIC Program may process eWIC transactions and redeem food benefits.
 - A current list of Montana's WIC-authorized vendors is available on the Montana WIC Program's website.

2. Participants

- Participants shall receive the WIC Program's supplemental food benefits free of charge.
- WIC food benefits must be redeemed in person at a Montana WIC authorized vendor unless a waiver or exception is in place by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

3. State WIC Agency Responsibilities

- Provide a uniform WIC food benefit which is in the form of an eWIC card. This benefit is used by all local WIC programs in Montana.
- Maintain an inventory of eWIC cards to distribute to local agencies as needed.
- The WIC food benefits are processed through the Federal Reserve System to Solutran, Minneapolis, MN, with whom the State WIC Agency contracts. The bank will provide reimbursement to the vendor within 3 business days of the transaction.
- Maintain a contingent revolving fund for the WIC Program at Solutran. Each day the bank presents the State Office with a statement showing the value of benefits paid. The bank is reimbursed for this amount using a telephone transfer system.

4. EBT Benefit Processing

The Montana WIC Program will start to review and plan for a new EBT processor contract at least two years before the current contract expires. This allows time to determine what changes need to be made to the contract and to have the new contractor selected with no interruption in service.

- The contract will be a sealed bid process, opened to all qualified institutions. The term of the contract is a minimum of three years, with three one-year extensions, based on the mutual approval of the Department and the contractor.

5. Current eWIC Processor Contract

- eWIC processing services: Solutran, 13305 12th Ave. N. Minneapolis, MN 56253. The current contract's term expires September 25, 2025.

6. Direct Distribution

- When a medical/exempt formula or nutritional is not available through a local authorized retailer, the local agency will order the prescribed product through the State Office Nutritionist(s).
 - The *Formula Order Form* will be completed and emailed to the montanawicprogram@mt.gov address to be processed at the State.
- The State Office Nutritionist will place the order with the manufacturer directly, or with state authorized vendor, and have the product(s) shipped to the local agency. Shipping to a participant home is an option in extenuating situations, such as lack of transportation.
 - The State Agency has a tracking system for formula ordering which includes maintaining purchase order forms or invoices electronically and a spreadsheet for communication between fiscal and nutrition staff.
 - The State Agency has contracts in place with all major formula manufacturers to receive discounts where applicable. Agreements are also in place to be able to return unopened formula where applicable.
 - The State only orders quantities appropriate for issuance, rather than in bulk as the need for specialized products often change and we aim to reduce waste of resources.
 - Montana also participates in the Minnesota Multistate Contracting Alliance for Pharmacy (group purchasing), or MMCAP. Any product available via MMCAP for WIC benefit fulfillment may be ordered using this agreement and system.
- Formula may be ordered and received at the State Office when distribution issues have been identified. All formula at the State Office will be logged in inventory, stored in a locked/secured location, and at room temperature or temperature indicated on product.
- The formula will be received by the local agency and directly issued to the participant at the earliest possible time.
 - The participant must provide a signature in receipt of the product which will be scanned into the participant chart for monitoring and tracking and/or the local agency staff who issues the product will document in chart the amount of product issued (with all related details for tracking).
 - The product will be stored within the clinic, in a locked/secure location and at regular room temperature until issued.
 - Local staff will log formula received, issued, and destroyed for inventory and tracking purposes on the *Formula Tracking Log*.